

LHA BOARD MEETING MINUTES – July 23, 2020 (virtual meeting via Zoom)
(Sandi Chesrown, Acting Secretary)

Voting Directors Present (14)

Peter Bota, Mike Cantwell, Sandi Chesrown, Michele H. Cornwell, Elaine Furlow, Pamela Gillen, Edith Gravely, Ralph Johnson, Tom Korn, Jim Lantelme, Laura London, Scott Matties, Richard Price, Michelle Winters (one Board Vacancy)

Non-Voting Directors Present (2)

Tom Wolfe, Matt Weinstein

LHA Staff (2)

Ginger Brown, Executive Director
Maia Potok-Holmes, Communications Manager

Guests Present (5)

Rip Sullivan, Delegate to the General Assembly
Takis Karantonis, Arlington County Board
Susan Soroko, Director, Creative Economy, AED Liaison
Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed, Project Manager, Plan Lee Highway, CPHD
Paul Holland, Chair, Plan Lee Highway

Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Scott Matties, President, at 8:30 am. After welcoming the participants, Scott introduced Takis Karantonis, the recently elected County Board member.

County Board Update

Takis noted that it was an honor and a joy to be involved in this meeting – his first constituent meeting as a County Board member.

Three comments:

1. Takis would like to push for more sustainable County funding for all three Alliances – perhaps three v. one year. The County Board is expected to set official liaisons in August, including the Board liaison to LHA and the Board liaison to Plan Lee Highway, and he hopes to be involved in the process to improve the quality of life in the corridor including transportation and related services;
2. Takis is here today to listen and get an update on Plan Lee Highway. At a later date, he would like discuss it in greater detail, as LHA is a very big player in the process, as was CPRO in the re-planning of Columbia Pike;
3. He supports LHA's efforts to re-name the corridor with a more welcoming name.

AED Update

Susan Soroko stated that due to Covid the County's current priority is the budget. She encouraged LHA to invite AED's Business Investment Group to give an update on the corridor and interactions with the Plan LH priorities. With regard to the Small Business Relief Fund and business grants, she encouraged LHA staff to send congratulations to Lee Highway award winners. Susan said that Racial Equity has become a County priority, and that LHA should touch base with the new Director of Racial Equity, Samia Bird, regarding the renaming process.

Michele asked how many businesses received grants. Tom Wolfe noted that as LHA's rep at a recent Chamber of Commerce meeting Telly Tucker, head of AED, was the guest speaker.

Telly discussed the grants, noting that there were 1117 applicants. Susan said of those 394 were approved– she was not sure how many were businesses in the Lee Corridor.

Update on Plan Lee Highway (PLH)

Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed gave an update on PLH activities. AECOM and the County staff are close to finalizing Phase 1, and that the Cultural Resources Survey (CRS) and Inspiration Report (formerly called Character Areas Analysis Report) will be published in August. *(The original date was May - due to COVID it was extended.)*

Natasha encouraged Board members to read the reports. The CRS provides a lot of interesting history for each of the five areas of consolidated neighborhoods. The Inspiration Report will lay out the framework for the land use scenarios, including unique challenges and opportunities. Phase 2 will begin in the Fall including development of land-use scenarios and transportation/connectivity improvements. It will also identify specific parcels with the potential for re-development. If the land use scenarios are completed, Paul and Sandi will organize late fall meetings with the civic associations and other organizations to discuss.

Update on the 2020 VA General Assembly Legislative Session

Delegate Rip Sullivan gave his annual update to the LHA Board on the transformative 2020 activities of the state legislature. He also welcomed Takis to the County Board, noting that he is very excited about Takis’s contributions. Areas where the 2020 legislative session provided progress included passage of:

- gun safety and the red flag bill to provide universal background checks;
- environmental legislation including the VA Clean Economy Act which helps the state to achieve clean energy by 2045 (including Dominion Energy to reach zero carbon emissions at the latest with a mandated renewable energy portfolio increasing solar and closing fossil fuel plants by 2050);
- Transportation Omnibus Bill to reduce congestion, modernize transit, prepare for electrification of the network;
- Equal Rights Amendment;
- early voting;
- progress on LGBT rights;
- criminal justice reform;
- put VA on a course to raise the minimum wage.

However, due to Covid-19, the budget that was passed is obsolete, and Rip will return to Richmond in August to discuss a revised budget. Although priorities will not change, they might be delayed. In regard to Lee Highway, Sandi asked about the VA Community Flood Preparedness Fund, but Rip said the specific ways Arlington might benefit are still to be developed. Sandi thanked Rip for his support for funding preservation of historic African American Graves, which included Calloway Cemetery and Mt. Salvation Cemetery in the corridor. Rip thanked LHA for all that the organization is involved with including leading the Renaming of Lee Highway, suggesting “Lee Hi Way.”

Takis noted that he has talked with DES about the Flood Preparedness Fund, and asked them to keep an eye on ways to incentivize private construction and promote resiliency.

President’s Report & Filling the Board Business Vacancy

Scott thanked ex Board member, Chris Sundloff, formerly of Arlington Community Federal Credit Union, for his contributions and wished him well at his new job in Austin, Texas. He noted that Chris was a Board member under the 'business slot.' Scott began the discussion on filling that vacancy, suggesting that Matt Rowan from Dominion Electric has agreed to be considered. Dominion Electric is one of the corridor's active Legacy Businesses, and Matt brings unique qualifications and a skill set including graphic design that could be helpful to Board activities. He asked if there were any other nominations for discussion.

Mike Cantwell noted that the LHA Bylaws require announcement of the candidate two weeks before the Board meeting. Since this procedure was not followed, the Board could not vote today. He recommended that the Board consider candidates who bring racial equity and diversity. Mike moved that the Board hold the slot open and recruit another business candidate through an open process. Assuming that candidate can be identified, the Board would vote at the September Board meeting. Tom Korn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mike agreed to take the lead in finding such a candidate (Nominations Committee).

Minutes LHA May 2020, Board Meeting

It was confirmed that the minutes had been circulated and approved by the Board via email.

Finance Committee

Michele H. Cornwell, Treasurer, provided the Treasurer's report. LHA has a balance of \$11,176. Less money was raised than originally anticipated as all events had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Staff time was also reduced. (See attached.) Michele noted that LHA must pay July/August rent, and on August 31 the three year lease at the Russell Building expires. The Executive Board met and recommends that the office be closed and all office furniture be moved to storage at Cube Smart on Lee Highway in East Falls Church. This move will save about \$2000 plus per month. Files would move to Ginger's house and most activities would be virtual. Michele noted that as soon as public health conditions change and in person meetings can be held, LHA should begin seeking new office space-hopefully by ISpring 2021.

Transportation Committee

Richard Price said there was not much to report, and Ginger noted that the next VDOT briefing would be August 12. The agenda will include the sound wall landscaping at the EFC pedestrian/bicycle bridge, staff involvement in Renaming Lee Highway, and possible mural locations along the corridor. The W&OD bridge was briefly discussed. Mike C. noted that he would like to see a welcome to Arlington sign. Sandi said that VDOT has denied signage on the bridge, but we will continue to work through Plan LH to try to improve the plaza and interpretive signage under the bridge at grade level. Tom K. encouraged art on the bridge (which LHA requested and NOVA Parks, VDOT, and AED have denied.)

Housing Committee and Missing Middle

Michelle Winters gave an update on the Missing Middle Study and the grant application that AHS and LHA submitted to the Virginia Housing & Development Authority (VHDA) – now called Virginia Housing. She noted there is still no response – hope to hear soon. If the application is approved, AHS/LHA will be coordinating with the County's Missing Middle Study, headed by Kellie Brown in CPHD. The County has released three research compendiums and will release a few more before the official kickoff in the fall. With regard to affordable housing and the Housing Conservation District (HCD) Natasha noted that the County is considering expansion of

their tools to encourage multifamily in light of changes to the Zoning Ordinance. Staff will continue to coordinate with Plan Lee Highway – whatever the Plan eventually says will dictate the HCDs.

Events Committee

Sandi Chesrown noted that the Committee has not met, but a few things are being considered including an educational forum with the AED Business Investment Group and Streetsense to discuss future retail and economic vitality. A committee meeting will take place later this summer. It is hoped that the Earth Day Every Day activities can occur in the Spring/Summer of 2021. Still being considered under Plan Lee Highway are distanced late fall walks to explain the land use scenarios for the five activity nodes.

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) and Public Facilities Committee (PFC)

Jim Lantelme who Chairs the PFC on Fire Station 8 gave an update. He noted that FS8 is still in the CIP and that the County continues to hope for a Fall meeting to review the final drawings. With regard to LHA having a seat at the SPRC table, he is hopeful but that information has not been released by the SPRC Subcommittee Chair, Elizabeth Gearin. Jim noted that as Chair of the PFRC, LHA will continue to be at the table for review of all projects along Lee Highway.

Planning Committee (PC)

Pamela Gillen, PC Chair, provided an update. The PC has not met since the May Board meeting. As was reported at the May Board meeting, the McDonalds' application was deferred in April, as the drawings did not meet many of the staff's, County Board's, and LHA's concerns. In May, Natasha provided McDonalds with imagery of better designed urban prototypes that would fit better on Lee Highway under Plan LH. McDonalds' attorney, Even Pritchard, has indicated that they might return to the Board with revised drawings in September or October or they might drop the application.

With regard to the McDonalds' wall mural facing the JMLCA tennis courts, Ginger, Pamela, and Sandi had a site meeting with Evan Pritchard. Saundra Green was out of town and could not attend. McDonalds is very interested in funding the restoration of the mural, as requested by JMLCA. They could either fund LHA or JMLCA as the project manager. Edith Gravely noted that there is a consensus that the neighborhood prefers a restoration of the Roderick Turner mural rather than a new mural. They are interested in young adults being involved in the restoration, as they were involved in the original creation under the management of Saundra Green in the early 1990s. The community is not interested in improving access between McDonalds and the Langston Brown Community Center. LHA will meet again on site with the artist, Saundra and Wilma to discuss this further.

With regard to day care, DaVinci in Cherrydale appears to be planning an opening.

Renaming Lee Highway

Scott introduced the topic, noting that LHA supported renaming in a letter to the County Board. What should be the next steps? He said that the County has not formally issued a statement, and that staff have not been directed to support the process. No one wants Plan Lee Highway to slow down. Jim noted that there was a statement of support for the idea at a recent County Board meeting. Michelle supported LHA's leadership role, and Tom Wolfe appreciated the

recent press release declaring that LHA was engaged. Mike said that he fully supported LHA's leadership role and leans toward not naming it after another person but rather making the name a celebration of place –he suggested the Arlington Way. Pamela fully supported LHA's role in setting up a Working Group. She said that data should be gathered on the impacts on small businesses. She also asked about our values and said that the name should no longer be 'Highway.' Tom Korn supported LHA's leadership role as part of our placemaking responsibilities. Elaine commented that so much work has already been done under LHA's Guiding Principles to make the corridor a welcoming place, and that the process should include small groups of advisors such as experts in branding, business development/economic vitality. A Steering Committee of the LHA Board should create a concise time frame and charge.

Ginger noted that she had reached out to the National Landing BID to better understand business costs and concerns when Jeff Davis Highway was renamed Richmond Highway last year. Most businesses supported the name change. Michele said she was in favor of renaming and LHA's leadership role, but she recommended starting conversations with businesses that have Lee Highway in the name. Takis stated that LHA is in an excellent position to lead this effort, and encouraged conversations with surrounding jurisdictions. Sandi reported that the County has indicated they would prefer to have those conversations with Falls Church City (which years ago changed the name to Washington Street), Fairfax City (changing to Fairfax Boulevard), and Fairfax County.

Scott moved that LHA develop a communications strategy through its Communications Committee, which Elaine Furlow chairs, with the result being a robust renaming process. Sandi seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Other LHA Activities

Stormwater and the CIP Bond

Ginger Brown updated the Board on stormwater management, noting that the County CIP included \$189 million in funding for improvements to stop flooding over 10 years, with a bond referendum on the November ballot of \$50 million. Demetra McBride, DES, will present ideas for improvements to flooding in Waverly Hills at the September 23 Waverly Hills CA membership meeting. If Board members are interested, Sandi will provide a meeting link.

Cowboy Café Placemaking

Ginger noted that Katie Cristol had put her in touch with the owner, and that with the help of Pamela Gillen, a mural by Maz Paz is being implemented. Lighting will be provided by Dominion Electric, and the parking lot is being changed into seating.

Shop Lee Shop Local

Maia has been doing interviews for LHA's newsletter with local businesses, which has proven to be a successful way to engage them.

Lee Arts Center

Sandi noted that Paul Holland and she, as Chair and Vice Chair of Plan Lee Highway Community Forum, had participated in a Leeway Overlee Civic Association meeting. After the meeting, they sent a letter to a committee that has been formed to save the Lee Arts Center, (currently closed due to COVID). They encouraged the artists and community to think about two different solutions:

- to devise a short term solution utilizing the facility, working with DPR, AED, and the County Manager's office,
- to develop a long term solution that provides a robust presence of arts and culture in the corridor. working with Plan Lee Highway, staff, and LHA.

Meeting Adjourned – 10:20 am Scott thanked everyone for their participation.

Next Board Meeting – 8:30 am, September 24, 2020
(AED Executive Director, Telly Tucker, will be invited to speak)